

In the Claims

Please substitute the following claims for those described in the office action mailed 9/22/2004:

1. - 90. (Canceled)
91. (New)    A snowmobile comprising:  
  
a chassis;  
  
at least one ski coupled to the chassis by a suspension so that the ski is pivotable about a steering axis;  
  
a shell defining a chamber fluidly communicating with an engine of the snowmobile;  
  
the shell fixed to a front portion the chassis and extending away from the chassis in a forward direction; and  
  
wherein the shell is disposed forward of the steering axis.
92. (New)    The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein the shell defines a plurality of channels.
93. (New)    The snowmobile of claim 2, wherein at least one of the channels is dimensioned to accept a control arm of the suspension.
94. (New)    The snowmobile of claim 1, further including a hood rotatably supported by the shell.
95. (New)    The snowmobile of claim 4, wherein the shell has sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the hood when the hood is in an open position
96. (New)    The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein the shell has sufficient flexibility to deflect during a collision for absorbing energy from the collision and for decelerating the snowmobile in a controlled fashion so as to protect the rider from rapid deceleration.

97. (New) The snowmobile of claim 1, where the chassis includes a shock tower defining an aperture sized to receive a conduit fluidly communicating with a chamber defined by the shell.

98. (New) The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein the shell includes a generally curved outer surface for gliding over deep snow.

99. (New) The snowmobile of claim 8, wherein the generally curved outer surface comprises a generally convex surface.

100. (New) A snowmobile comprising:  
a chassis;  
a shell fixed to a front portion the chassis and extending away from the chassis in a forward direction;  
a hood rotatably supported by the shell;  
the shell defining a chamber fluidly communicating with an engine of the snowmobile;  
the hood including an outer wall and an inner wall;  
the walls of the hood defining a plenum; and  
the plenum fluidly communicating with the chamber defined by the shell at least when the hood is in a closed position.

101. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein the chamber defined by the shell may be accessed via an opening in the shell when the hood is in an open position.

102. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein a longitudinal axis of the plenum and a longitudinal axis of a throttle body of the snowmobile are generally parallel to one another.

103. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein a longitudinal axis of the plenum and a longitudinal axis of a throttle body of the snowmobile intersect to define an angle.

104. (New) The snowmobile of claim 13, wherein the angle is an acute angle.

105. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein air enters the engine via an air flow path extending through the plenum and the chamber; and

wherein the air flow path has a length greater than a length of the hood of the snowmobile.

106. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, further including a flexible coupling interposed between the shell and the engine.

107. (New) The snowmobile of claim 16, wherein the flexible coupling comprises an elastomeric material.

108. (New) The snowmobile of claim 16, wherein the flexible coupling comprises a plurality of convolutions.

109. (New) The snowmobile of claim 16, wherein the flexible coupling comprises a bellows.

110. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, further comprising at least one ski coupled to the chassis by a suspension such that the ski is rotatable about a steering axis; and

wherein the shell is disposed forward of the steering axis.

111. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein the plenum communicates with an inlet disposed proximate a rider area of the snowmobile.

112. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein the shell has sufficient rigidity to support the weight of a hood of the snowmobile when the hood is in an open position

113. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, where the chassis includes a shock tower defining an aperture sized to receive a conduit fluidly communicating with the chamber of the shell.

114. (New) The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein the shell includes a generally curved outer surface for gliding over deep snow.

115. (New) The snowmobile of claim 24, wherein the generally curved outer surface comprises a generally convex surface.

116 (New) A snowmobile comprising:  
a chassis;  
a shell fixed to a front portion the chassis and extending away from the chassis in a forward direction;  
an engine coupled to the chassis for propelling the snowmobile; and  
the shell defining a chamber fluidly communicating with the engine via a flexible coupling interposed between the shell and the engine.

117. (New) The snowmobile of claim 26, further including a hood having an outer wall and an inner wall; and  
the walls of the hood defining a plenum communicating with the chamber.

118. (New) The snowmobile of claim 27, wherein a longitudinal axis of the plenum and a longitudinal axis of a throttle body of the snowmobile are generally parallel to one another.

119. (New) The snowmobile of claim 27, wherein a longitudinal axis of the plenum and a longitudinal axis of a throttle body of the snowmobile intersect to define an angle.

120. (New) The snowmobile of claim 29, wherein the angle is an acute angle.

121. (New) The snowmobile of claim 26, wherein air enters the engine via an air flow path extending through the plenum and the chamber; and

wherein the air flow path has a length greater than a length of the hood of the snowmobile.

122. (New) The snowmobile of claim 26, wherein the plenum communicates with an inlet disposed proximate a rider area of the snowmobile.

123. (New) The snowmobile of claim 26, where the chassis includes a shock tower defining an aperture sized to receive a conduit fluidly communicating with the chamber of the shell.

124. (New) The snowmobile of claim 26, wherein the shell includes a generally curved outer surface for gliding over deep snow.

125. (New) The snowmobile of claim 34, wherein the generally curved outer surface comprises a generally convex surface.